The Faculty of Music, University of Toronto
present

Music and Poetry
Twelve Poems
of Emily Dickinson

set to music by
Aaron Copland
with

Vilma Indra Vitols, mezzo-soprano
John Hawkins, piano
Eric Domville, commentator

Thursday Noon Series

Thursday, October 5, 1995
12:10 pm

Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson

set to music by

Aaron Copland

(1900 - 1990)

with

Vilma Indra Vitols, mezzo soprano

John Hawkins, piano

Eric Domville, commentator

Part I

Nature, the gentlest mother

There came a wind like a bugle

Whey do they shut me out of Heaven?

The world feels dusty

Heart, we will forget him

Dear March, come in!

Sleep is supposed to be

Part II

When they come back

I felt a funeral in my brain

I've heard an organ talk sometimes

Going to Heaven!

The Chariot

Nature, the gentlest mother

Nature the gentlest mother
Impatient of no child
The feeblest or the waywardest.
Her admonition mild
In forest and the hill
By traveler is heard
Restraining rampant squirrel or too impetuous bird.

How fair her conversation
A summer afternoon.
Her household, her assembly
And when the sun goes down
Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket
The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep,
She turns as long away,
As will suffice to light her lamps.
Then, bending from the sky,
With infinite affection
And infiniter care
Her golden finger on her lip
Wills silence everywhere.

There came a wind like a bugle

There came a wind like a bugle;
It quivered through the grass,
And a green chill upon the heat
So ominous did pass
We barred the windows and the doors
As from an emerald ghost;
The doom's electric moccasin
That very instant passed.
On a strange mob of panting trees,
And fences fled away,

And rivers where the houses ran
The living looked that day.
The bell within the steeple wild
The flying tidings whirled.
How much can come
And much can go,
And yet abide the world!

Why do they shut me out of Heaven?

Why do they shut me out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?
But I can sing a little minor,
Timid as a bird.

Wouldn't the angels try me just once more
Just see if I troubled them
But don't shut the door, don't shut the door.

Oh if I were the gentlemen in the white robes
And they were the little hand that knocked,
Could I forbid, could I forbid.

Why do they shut me out of heaven,
Did I sing too loud?

The world feels dusty

The world feels dusty, when we stop to die
We want the dew then
Honors taste dry.

Flags vex a dying face
But the least fan stirred by a friend's hand
Cools like the rain.

Mine be the ministry when thy thirst comes
Dews of thyself to fetch and holy balms.

Heart, we will forget him

Heart, we will forget him
You and I, tonight.
You may forget the warmth he gave.
I will forget the light.

When you have done, pray tell me,
That I my thoughts may dim.
Haste, lest while you're lagging,
I may remember him.

Dear March, come in!

Dear March come in
How glad I am
I looked for you before.
Put down your hat

You must have walked
How out of breath you are.

Dear March, how are you?
And the rest?
Did you leave Nature well?
Oh, March come right upstairs with me
I have so much to tell.

I got your letter and the bird's
The maples never knew that you were coming,
I declare,
How red their faces grew,
But March forgive me.
And all those hills you left for me to hue,
There was no purple suitable,
You took it all with you.

Who knocks? that April?
Lock the door,
I will not be pursued
He stayed away a year,
To call when I am occupied.

But trifles look so trivial
As soon as you have come
And blame is just as dear as praise
And praise as mere as blame.

Sleep is supposed to be

Sleep is supposed to be,
By souls of sanity,
The shutting of the eye.

Sleep is the station grand
Down which on either hand
The hosts of witness stand.

Morn is supposed to be,
By people of degree
The breaking of the day,

Morning has not occurred
That shall aurora be
East of Eternity

One with the banner gay
One in the red array
That is the break of day.

When they come back

When they come back if blossoms do,
I always feel a doubt if blossoms can be born again
When once the art is out.

When they begin if robins do
I always had a fear I did not tell
It was their last Experiment last year.

When it is May, if May return
Has nobody a pang that on a face so beautiful
We might not look again.

If I am there, one does not know
What party one may be tomorrow,
But if I am there, I take back all I say.

I felt a funeral in my brain

I felt a funeral in my brain,
And mourners, to and fro,
Kept treading, treading, till it seemed
That sense was breaking through.

And when they all were seated,
A service like a drum
Kept beating, beating, till I thought
My mind was going numb.

And then I heard them lift a box,
And creak across my soul
With those same boots of lead again.
Then space began to toll

As all the heavens were a bell,
And Being but an ear,
And I and silence some strange race,
Wrecked, solitary, here.

I've heard an organ talk sometimes

I've heard on organ talk sometimes
In a cathedral aisle
And understood no word it said
Yet held my breath the while.

And risen up and gone away,
A more Bernardine girl
And know not what was done to me
In that old hallowed aisle.

Going to Heaven!

Going to Heaven! Going to Heaven!
I don't know when
Pray do not ask me how
Indeed I'm too astonished to think of answering you.
Going to Heaven!
How dim it sounds.
And yet it will be done
As sure as flocks go home at night
Unto the shepherd's arm!

Perhaps you're going too!
Who knows?
If you should get there first
Save just a little place for me,
Close to the two I lost.
The smallest 'robe' will fit me
And just a bit of 'crown'
For you know we do not mind our dress
When we are going home.

Going to Heaven!
I'm glad I don't believe it
For it would stop my breath
And I'd like to look a little more
At such a curious earth.

I am glad they did believe it
Whom I have never found
Since the mighty autumn afternoon
I left them in the ground.

The Chariot

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

Eric Domville is Emeritus Professor of English at Trinity College, U of T. Currently Prof. Domville is teaching jointly with Prof. Jean MacPhail, a course on song in English at the Royal Conservatory of Music.

John Hawkins is a Professor of Theory and Composition at the Faculty of Music, U of T. His latest work, *Nightsong*, a setting of a poem by Dylan Thomas, will be given its first performance on March 21, 1996 at the Thursday Noon Series.

Vilma Indra Vitols is in her second year of the Operatic Performance Programme at the Faculty of Music, U of T. She will sing the role of Cherubino in the forthcoming Opera Division staging of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. Her vocal teacher is Prof. Jean MacPhail.

Next Music & Poetry Concert: Thursday Noon Series, November 16, 1995
Works by Berg and Britten